

PREVALENCE OF VENEREAL DISEASE IN PROSTITUTES*

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Throughout man's history, the spread of venereal disease has been linked with prostitution. It has long been noted that wherever prostitution has flourished, high attack rates of venereal infection could be found in the community.

Experience in New York City and in the United States indicates that the prostitute is no longer the major vector of venereal disease. Her place has been taken by the promiscuous amateur, usually referred to as a "pick-up" or a "friend". At the present time, the prostitute accounts for approximately 10 per cent. of the venereal disease infections reported by the U.S. Armed Forces in the New York area, as compared with 86 per cent. for the combined "pick-up" and "friend" categories. Civilian experience in New York City confirms these findings.

Although the role of the prostitute as a vector of venereal disease has gradually declined in importance as compared with the promiscuous amateur, prostitution nevertheless continues to present an important problem. In New York City prostitution is illegal and is rigidly suppressed by the police authorities. Each day women arrested for soliciting, vagrancy, or prostitution are arraigned before a magistrate in the "Court for Vagrant Women". The New York City Department of Health maintains a clinic at this court for the examination of these women in accordance with the requirements of the State Public Health Law.

Medical examination procedure at this court clinic consists of a careful physical inspection, with special reference to the skin and mucous membranes, serological examination of the blood for syphilis, and a pelvic examination, including a smear and culture for gonococci. Whenever indicated, darkfield examinations, intradermal tests for lymphogranuloma venereum, and smears for Donovan bodies are

made. All laboratory examinations are made in the diagnostic laboratory of the New York City Health Department.

A previous study of the accumulated data of these court cases revealed several interesting features concerning the trend of syphilis and gonorrhoea in New York City in the period 1936-1946 (Rosenthal and Kerchner, 1948). These observations have been continued up to and including 1956, and are presented because they describe the experience of the Health Department in the antibiotic era, and offer data which may be compared with those obtained before antibiotics came into general use.

Table I (opposite) presents the total number of women examined annually during the period 1936-1956, with the numbers infected with gonorrhoea, with syphilis, and with both syphilis and gonorrhoea. The Figure (opposite) presents this data graphically from 1943. The greatest number of women examined in a single year was seen in 1940.

There then followed a fairly steady decline until 1952. Since that time, the number has gradually risen, with 584 more women examined in 1956 than in 1952, an increase of 26 per cent. A comparison with the total number examined in 1940, however, reveals that 49 per cent. fewer women were brought to court in 1956 than in 1940.

The decrease in the number of women brought to court has been much greater for white than for non-white women. In the 4-year period 1943 to 1946, an average of 1,737 white women was examined annually (Rosenthal and Kerchner, 1948). A decade later, in the 4-year period 1953 to 1956, the average number was 464 (Table II, overleaf), a decline of 73.2 per cent.

A similar comparison of the average number of non-white women examined in the same 4-year periods indicates that there has been only a 24.6 per

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TABLE I
DIAGNOSIS OF ALL FEMALE COURT CASES (1936-1956)

Year	Total Examined	Infection			Total Gonorrhoea		Total Syphilis	
		Gonorrhoea Only	Syphilis and Gonorrhoea	Syphilis Only	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1936	3,824	573	316	1,049	889	23.3	1,365	35.7
1937	4,254	781	427	919	1,208	28.4	1,346	31.6
1938	4,798	847	404	1,096	1,251	26.1	1,500	31.2
1939	4,586	721	318	1,064	1,039	22.6	1,382	30.1
1940	5,561	1,642	415	792	2,057	37.0	1,207	21.7
1941	5,303	1,971	420	542	2,391	45.1	962	18.1
1942	5,520	1,571	322	542	1,893	34.3	864	15.6
1943	4,595	1,331	266	461	1,597	34.8	727	15.8
1944	4,488	1,274	246	410	1,520	33.9	656	14.6
1945	4,814	1,238	313	453	1,551	32.2	766	15.9
1946	4,038	684	267	594	951	23.6	861	21.3
1947	3,588	666	211	531	877	24.4	742	20.7
1948	3,685	646	153	475	799	21.7	628	17.0
1949	3,269	446	92	427	538	16.5	519	15.9
1950	2,999	325	36	249	361	12.0	285	9.5
1951	2,681	141	15	264	156	5.8	279	10.4
1952	2,268	133	19	250	152	6.7	269	11.9
1953	2,306	134	7	163	141	6.1	170	7.4
1954	2,448	138	5	71	143	5.8	76	3.1
1955	2,891	158	8	170	166	5.7	178	6.2
1956	2,852	136	12	229	148	5.2	241	8.5

cent. decline, from an average of 2,036 examined annually in the years 1943 to 1946, to an average of 1,535 examined annually in the years 1953 to 1956.

It is thus apparent that the number of women arrested on charges of prostitution has decreased appreciably over the past 10 years. While this may

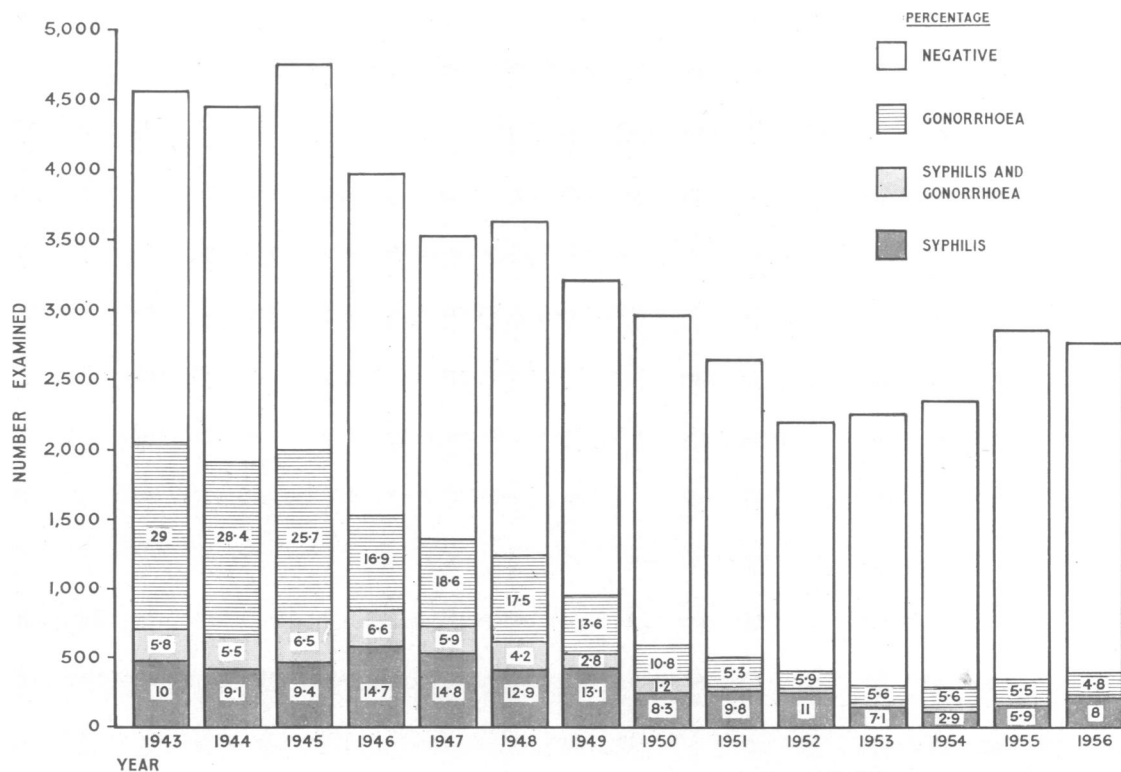


FIGURE.—Venereal disease in female court cases, New York City, 1943-1956

TABLE II

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN EXAMINED AT THE WOMEN'S COURT CLINIC BY THE NEW YORK CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT BY AGE AND COLOUR, 1950-1956

Year			1950		1951		1952		1953		1954		1955		1956	
Colour			White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White
Age Group (yrs)	Numbers	All Ages ..	938	1,667	679	1,555	494	1,252	392	1,345	453	1,349	471	1,750	541	1,697
		Under 18 ..	2	6	0	4	2	6	2	5	2	12	3	5	2	8
		18-19 ..	30	47	12	33	12	39	8	48	14	36	9	35	7	19
		20-24 ..	214	507	168	522	118	448	112	505	114	500	97	572	99	452
		25-29 ..	216	525	150	490	106	365	64	422	110	448	83	569	140	590
		30-34 ..	137	299	130	284	95	222	72	215	78	209	89	299	97	316
		35-39 ..	107	152	77	133	61	91	53	91	42	95	73	168	67	168
		40-44 ..	119	82	67	55	48	42	35	41	28	31	38	62	45	83
		45-49 ..	58	36	42	27	21	28	26	9	32	12	41	25	41	28
		50-54 ..	37	7	19	5	17	8	9	5	22	4	24	10	25	18
		55 and Over ..	18	5	13	1	13	3	11	3	9	2	14	3	16	10
		Age Unknown	0	1	1	1	1	—	—	1	2	—	—	2	2	5
	Percent-ages	All Ages ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		Under 18 ..	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.5
		18-19 ..	3.2	2.8	1.8	2.1	2.4	3.1	2.1	3.6	3.1	2.7	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.1
		20-24 ..	22.8	30.4	24.8	33.5	23.9	35.8	28.6	37.5	25.1	37.1	20.6	32.7	18.3	26.6
		25-29 ..	23.0	31.5	22.1	31.5	21.5	29.2	16.3	31.4	24.3	33.2	17.6	32.5	25.9	34.8
		30-34 ..	14.6	17.9	19.1	18.3	19.2	17.7	18.4	16.0	17.2	15.5	18.9	17.1	17.9	18.6
		35-39 ..	11.4	9.1	11.3	8.6	12.4	7.3	13.5	6.7	9.3	7.0	15.5	9.6	12.4	9.9
		40-44 ..	12.7	4.9	9.9	3.5	9.7	3.4	8.9	3.0	6.2	2.3	8.1	3.6	8.3	4.9
		45-49 ..	6.2	2.2	6.2	1.7	4.3	2.2	6.6	0.7	7.1	0.9	8.7	1.4	7.6	1.6
		50-54 ..	4.0	0.4	2.8	0.3	3.4	0.6	2.3	0.4	4.9	0.3	5.1	0.5	4.6	1.1
		55 and Over ..	1.9	0.3	1.9	0.1	2.6	0.2	2.8	0.2	2.0	0.1	3.0	0.2	2.9	0.6
		Age Unknown	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.3

suggest that there has also been a general decrease in prostitution in the city, such a conclusion cannot be made from court data alone, since the number of women arrested on such charges depends specifically on the extent and quality of police activity. It appears probable, however, that such factors as the current improvement in economic conditions, the change from the stresses and strains of a war-time economy to a relatively more stable peace-time existence, and increasing competition from the promiscuous amateur, have all combined to reduce prostitution. An important additional factor has been the intensive educational efforts on the part of public health authorities, alerting the general public to the dangers of venereal disease.

The number in each age group arrested and examined is also of special interest. Table II shows that approximately one-fifth of the white women are between 20 and 25 years of age, and another one-fifth between 25 and 30 years of age. For non-white women, about one-third are between 20 and 25 years of age and another one-third between 25 and 30 years of age. The percentage of teenagers among these women is small. In the 1943 to 1946 period, teen-agers made up about one-twentieth of the entire group both for white and non-white; 10 years later, in the 1953 to 1956 period, the number of teen-agers had declined by 50 per cent. in both white and non-white groups.

The percentage of women found infected with gonorrhoea increased markedly in 1940 because of the introduction in that year of gonococcus culture to the diagnostic armamentarium. The percentage began to fall after 1947 when penicillin became available for general use. The policy of treating all these women prophylactically with penicillin was adopted in 1950 and has proved to be an important aid in the administrative handling of these cases. In 1956 only 5.2 per cent. of the women examined were found to be infected with gonorrhoea compared with 23.6 per cent. for 1946.

The special value of gonococcus culture and its superiority over examination of the stained spread in the diagnosis of gonorrhoea is demonstrated in this study (Table III, opposite). The proportion found infected by the culture method in the 5-year period 1952-1956 was higher in each year than with the spread technique. The 5-year average indicates that 75.6 per cent. of the gonorrhoea patients could be diagnosed by the culture method as compared with 42.3 per cent. by the examination of the stained spread.

The percentage of women found to have syphilis has also declined in the past 20 years. The proportion found to be infected fell from 35.7 per cent. in 1936 to 21.3 per cent. in 1946, and then still further to 8.5 per cent. in 1956. A striking drop in the number of women found to have infectious lesions of syphilis has occurred in the last 10 years. In the

TABLE III

NUMBER OF EXAMINATIONS AND BACTERIOLOGICAL FINDINGS IN ALL WOMEN BROUGHT TO COURT (1952-1956)

Year			1952*		1953		1954		1955		1956	
			Num- ber	Per cent.	Num- ber	Per cent.	Num- ber	Per cent.	Num- ber	Per cent.	Num- ber	Per cent.
Total New Examinations			2,268	100.0	2,306	100.0	2,448	100.0	2,891	100.0	2,854	100.0
Diagnosis	1. Gonorrhoea	a. Clinical gonorrhoea	152	6.7	141	6.1	143	5.8	166	5.7	148	5.2
		b. Clinical gonorrhoea; positive smear	—	—	6	0.3	8	0.3	—	—	17	0.6
		c. Clinical gonorrhoea; positive culture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		d. Clinical gonorrhoea; positive smear and culture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	0.1
		e. Positive smear only	29	1.3	21	0.9	34	1.4	38	1.3	30	1.1
		f. Positive culture only	93	4.1	69	3.0	72	2.9	87	3.0	78	2.7
		g. Positive smear and culture	30	1.3	44	1.9	28	1.1	41	1.4	19	0.7
	2. Syphilis ..	a. Clinical syphilis only	269	11.9	170	7.4	76	3.1	178	6.2	241	8.4
		b. Positive serology	1	†	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		c. Clinical syphilis and positive serology	267	11.8	170	7.4	74	3.0	177	6.1	241	8.4
	3. Negative		1	†	—	—	2	0.1	1	†	—	—
			1,866	82.3	2,002	86.8	2,234	91.3	2,555	88.4	2,477	86.8
	4. Both Syphilis and Gonorrhoea (included above) ..		19	0.8	7	0.3	5	0.2	8	0.3	12	0.4

* The 1952 gonorrhoea diagnoses are classified according to smear and culture findings only. The clinical findings are not available.

† Less than one-tenth of one per cent.

5-year period from 1942 to 1946, 186 cases of clinical syphilis were found (0.8 per cent. of the women examined). In the 5-year period from 1952 to 1956, only five women with infectious syphilitic lesions were found (0.04 per cent. of the women examined; see Table III).

The proportion of patients with latent syphilis fell from 22.7 per cent. in 1946 to 4.0 per cent. in 1954. In the past 2 years, however, the proportion increased to 7.9 per cent. in 1955 and 10.5 per cent. in 1956. These increases have coincided with an increase in the number of women brought to court in the past 2 years. There has been no significant change in the racial distribution of these women during this period. The increase occurred mainly in the non-white group, the total rising from 4.7 per cent. in 1954 to 12.6 per cent. in 1956. Treated by the χ^2 method, this increase is found to be statistically significant. There was also an increase among the white women from 2.0 per cent. to 4.1 per cent., but this just falls short of statistical significance. The numbers and percentages found infected are shown in Table IV (overleaf) by age and colour. In almost every age group there is a larger proportion of non-white women infected than white women. The increase in latent syphilis among these women in the past 2 years may be related to the recently reported increase of infectious syphilis in the United States.

In 1946, 38.2 per cent. of the arrested group of prostitutes had one or more venereal diseases; 10 years later, in 1956, this percentage had fallen to

13.2 per cent. A comparison with the results of the examination of sexually promiscuous women who are not in the so-called prostitute class may be of interest. The contacts of venereal disease patients studied by the New York City Health Department in 1943 and 1944 is compared with a similar study of these contacts during the first 4 months of 1957. In 1943 and 1944, 3,625 contacts classified as "friends" were examined; of these 54 per cent. were found to be infected with venereal disease. Of 474 contacts classified as "pick-ups", 52 per cent. were found to be infected. Of 58 contacts described as prostitutes but not arrested, 55 per cent. were found to be infected. In the first 4 months of 1957, it was found that 60.9 per cent. of 2,213 contacts classified as "friend", 44.7 per cent. of 441 contacts classified as "pick-ups", and 51.5 per cent. of 33 contacts classified as prostitutes, but not arrested, were found to be infected with venereal disease.

It is apparent from these data that there has been little change in the percentages of contacts found infected in 1957 as compared with 1943 and 1944. This is not unexpected, since all of these women were promiscuous and associated with cases of venereal disease. It is of interest to point out the relatively small number of prostitutes (only 33) in the first 4 months of 1957 named as contacts by those infected with venereal disease. This was only 0.7 per cent. of the 4,642 contacts investigated, whereas "friends" and "pick-ups" together made up 63.8 per cent.

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN FOUND INFECTED OF THOSE EXAMINED AT THE WOMEN'S COURT CLINIC
BY THE NEW YORK CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT, BY AGE AND COLOUR (1950-1956)

Infection		Latent Syphilis							Gonorrhoea and/or Primary and Secondary Syphilis						
Year		1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Age Group (yrs)	All Ages ..	275	270	263	166	72	175	236	335	142	137	121	123	143	129
	White ..	42	39	41	21	9	14	22	80	29	20	15	21	17	22
	Non-white	233	231	222	145	63	161	214	255	113	117	106	102	126	107
	Under 18 ..	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0
	White ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Non-white	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
	18-19 ..	4	1	4	1	1	3	2	19	5	13	10	3	6	4
	White ..	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	1	0	1	1
	Non-white	4	1	3	1	1	3	2	14	3	13	9	3	5	3
	20-24 ..	69	55	62	42	16	27	49	132	65	70	64	59	65	46
	White ..	11	7	4	4	1	1	3	30	9	8	9	9	10	5
	Non-white	58	48	58	38	15	26	46	102	56	62	55	50	55	41
	25-29 ..	92	93	71	48	27	64	72	97	37	32	29	39	45	40
	White ..	12	12	6	4	1	3	2	22	6	7	1	3	4	7
	Non-white	80	81	65	44	26	61	70	75	31	25	28	34	44	33
	30-34 ..	52	71	63	43	12	37	47	42	24	12	13	11	20	23
	White ..	4	5	8	2	1	2	2	13	7	2	2	5	4	3
	Non-white	48	66	55	41	11	35	45	29	17	10	11	6	16	20
	35-39 ..	29	26	30	16	7	22	30	27	3	6	1	7	5	9
	White ..	1	5	7	3	2	1	3	3	1	3	1	0	5	2
	Non-white	28	21	23	13	5	21	27	24	2	3	0	7	5	7
	40-44 ..	15	13	17	10	5	14	15	9	4	2	1	1	0	3
	White ..	7	3	10	3	0	4	5	3	3	0	0	1	0	2
	Non-white	8	10	7	7	5	10	10	4	1	2	1	0	0	1
	45-49 ..	10	6	12	1	2	4	7	5	2	1	1	2	0	2
	White ..	5	3	3	1	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	2
	Non-white	5	3	9	0	0	3	4	3	2	1	1	1	0	0
	50-54 ..	2	2	1	4	0	4	9	3	0	0	0	0	1	1
	White ..	2	2	1	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Non-white	0	0	0	1	0	2	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
	55 and Over ..	1	2	2	1	2	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	White ..	0	2	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-white	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Age Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	White ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-white	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Percentages	All Ages ..	10.6	12.1	15.1	9.6	4.0	7.9	10.5	12.9	6.4	7.8	7.0	6.8	6.4	5.8
	White ..	4.5	5.7	8.3	5.4	2.0	3.0	4.1	8.5	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.6	3.6	4.1
	Non-white	14.0	14.9	17.7	10.8	4.7	9.2	12.6	15.3	7.3	9.3	7.9	7.6	7.2	6.3
	Under 18 ..	12.5	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	12.5	28.6	7.1	12.5	0.0
	White ..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Non-white	16.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	16.7	20.0	8.3	20.0	0.0
	18-19 ..	5.2	2.2	7.8	1.8	2.0	6.8	7.7	24.7	11.1	25.5	17.9	6.0	13.6	15.4
	White ..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	16.7	0.0	12.5	0.0	11.1	14.3
	Non-white	8.5	3.0	7.7	2.1	2.8	8.6	10.5	29.8	9.1	33.3	18.8	8.3	14.3	15.8
	20-24 ..	9.6	8.0	11.0	6.8	2.6	4.0	8.9	18.3	9.4	12.4	10.4	9.6	9.7	8.3
	White ..	5.1	4.2	3.4	3.6	0.9	1.0	3.0	14.0	5.4	6.8	8.0	7.9	10.3	5.1
	Non-white	11.4	9.2	12.9	7.5	3.0	4.5	10.2	20.1	10.7	13.8	10.9	10.0	9.6	9.1
	25-29 ..	12.4	14.5	15.1	9.9	4.8	9.8	9.9	13.1	5.8	6.8	6.0	7.0	6.9	5.5
	White ..	5.6	8.0	5.7	6.2	0.9	3.6	1.4	10.2	4.0	6.6	1.6	4.5	1.2	5.0
	Non-white	15.2	16.5	17.8	10.4	5.8	10.7	11.9	14.3	6.3	6.8	6.6	7.6	7.7	5.6
	30-34 ..	11.9	17.1	19.9	15.0	4.2	9.5	11.4	9.6	5.8	3.8	4.5	3.8	5.2	5.6
	White ..	2.9	3.8	8.4	2.8	1.3	2.2	2.1	9.5	5.4	2.1	2.8	2.9	4.5	3.1
	Non-white	16.1	23.2	24.8	19.1	5.3	11.7	14.2	9.7	6.0	4.5	5.1	2.9	5.4	6.3
	35-39 ..	11.2	12.4	19.7	11.1	5.1	9.1	12.8	10.4	1.4	3.9	0.7	5.1	2.1	3.8
	White ..	0.9	6.5	11.5	5.7	4.8	1.4	4.5	2.8	1.3	4.9	1.9	0.0	0.0	3.0
	Non-white	18.4	15.8	25.3	14.3	5.3	12.5	16.1	15.8	1.5	3.3	0.0	7.4	3.0	4.2
	40-44 ..	7.5	10.7	18.9	13.2	8.5	14.0	11.7	4.5	3.3	2.2	1.3	1.7	0.0	2.3
	White ..	5.9	4.5	20.8	8.6	0.0	10.5	11.1	4.2	4.5	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	4.4
	Non-white	9.8	18.2	16.7	17.1	16.1	16.1	12.0	4.9	1.8	4.8	2.4	0.0	0.0	1.2

TABLE IV—continued

Infection			Latent Syphilis							Gonorrhoea and/or Primary and Secondary Syphilis						
Year			1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Age Group (yrs)	Percentages	45-49 ..	10.6	8.7	24.5	2.9	4.5	6.1	10.1	5.3	2.9	2.0	2.9	4.5	0.0	2.9
		White ..	8.6	7.1	14.3	3.8	6.2	2.4	7.3	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	4.9
		Non-white	13.9	11.1	32.1	0.0	0.0	12.0	14.3	8.3	7.4	3.6	11.1	8.3	0.0	0.0
		50-54 ..	4.5	8.3	4.0	28.6	0.0	11.8	20.9	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.3
		White ..	5.4	10.5	5.9	33.3	0.0	8.3	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0
		Non-white	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0	38.9	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6
		55 and Over	4.3	14.3	12.5	7.1	18.2	0.0	15.4	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		White ..	0.0	15.4	7.7	9.1	22.2	0.0	12.5	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Non-white	20.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Age Unknown	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3
		White ..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Non-white	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0

Table V gives the number and percentage of narcotic addicts found among the women arraigned on prostitutional charges in each year since 1953. It is apparent that approximately one-third of the women admitted or gave indications of addiction to drugs. This is probably an underestimate of the actual number, since addicts rarely admit their habit. The high percentage of addiction in this group indicates that drug addiction and prostitution are frequently associated manifestations of anti-social behaviour. The venereal disease control officer is thus necessarily concerned with the problem of narcotic addiction, which unfortunately appears to be increasing in many areas.

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF NARCOTIC ADDICTS FOUND AMONG WOMEN ARRAIGNED IN WOMEN'S COURT (1953-1956)

Year	No. of Women's Court Cases	Addicts Found Among Women's Court Cases	
		Number	Percentage
1953	1,737	451	26.0
1954	1,801	628	34.9
1955	2,221	982	44.2
1956	2,238	816	36.5

Summary

The results of the examination of women arrested on charges of prostitution in New York City in the period 1950 to 1956 are analysed and compared with similar data obtained for the years 1936 to 1946. It is shown that:

(1) In New York City the prostitute plays a lesser role at the present time in the spread of venereal disease than the promiscuous amateur.

(2) The number of prostitutes arrested annually decreased 49 per cent. in the 17-year period 1940 to 1956, but it must be pointed out that arrests have increased since 1952.

(3) The number of white women arrested has declined by 73.2 per cent. during the past 10 years, while that of non-white women has declined by only 24.6 per cent.

(4) Of the white women arrested, one-fifth were between 20 and 25 years of age and another one-fifth between 25 to 30 years of age; of the non-white women arrested, one-third were between 20 to 25 years of age and another one-third between 25 to 30 years of age.

(5) There has been a marked decrease in the number of women found to be infected with gonorrhoea; only 5.2 per cent. in 1956 compared with 23.6 per cent. in 1946.

(6) The percentage of women with primary or secondary syphilis has decreased very markedly. During the period 1952-1956, only five women were found with infectious syphilitic lesions, compared with 186 cases in the years 1942 to 1946.

(7) The percentage of cases of latent syphilis declined from 22.7 per cent. in 1946 to 4.0 per cent. in 1954. Since 1954, however, this percentage has risen to 10.5 per cent. in 1956.

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